

ARKANSAS TRANSITIONAL EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

What is TEA?

The Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program helps needy families with children become more responsible for their own support and less dependent on public assistance. The purpose is to help able-bodied adults get and keep a job, to help minor parents stay in school, to promote the family unit and to reduce out-of-wedlock births.

Benefits may include cash payments, childcare assistance, help with transportation and other work-related expenses and medical services.

Diversion Assistance is a one-time payment to a family to help them through a hard time so the parent can keep or accept a job. How much help you get is based on what your case manager determines you need to solve the problem. The payment is capped at a certain limit.

First TEA Interview

During your first interview, your case manager will review your application questions and ask you about your family's circumstances. This will help determine what services your family needs and is eligible for.

Personal Responsibility Agreement

The Personal Responsibility Agreement (PRA) states what you must do to get help. You must comply with Child Support Enforcement unless you have good cause. You must also meet work requirements and certain responsibilities to your family.

The agreement also requires that your school-age children attend school and that your preschooler receives his or her shots. Your case manager will discuss these responsibilities with you. If you fail to meet these conditions, your cash-assistance payment may be reduced.

Employment Plan

If you are approved for cash assistance, you and your case manager may develop an Employment Plan. The plan outlines how you and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services will work to help you get and keep a job. You and your case manager will work as a team on this plan. When you sign it, you are saying that you will

follow the plan. When your case manager signs, he or she is committing state resources to help you get a job.

Time Limits

A family who meets the eligibility requirements may get TEA cash payments for up to 24 months. The 24 months do not have to be in a row. If you are a grandparent getting benefits for your grandchildren, benefits will be available for a longer period of time. Your case manager can explain this more fully.

General Eligibility Requirements

To qualify, you must meet these conditions:

- You must have a child under 18 years old who is related to and living with you. The relationship and age must be verified by birth certificate or other documents.
- You must have or apply for Social Security numbers for all family members.
- Parents younger than 18 must live in their parent's home or in an adult-supervised home, except under limited conditions. They also must attend high school or a Vo-Tech school or get a GED.
- You must be a United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted under certain criteria.
- The family must currently live in Arkansas with the intent to stay in Arkansas.
- You can receive help for up to 24 months. There is no time limit if you are seeking cash assistance for someone else's children, such as a grandchild.
- You can have some income, including earnings, and still be eligible to receive help. The family's total countable income must be less the state's standard.

How long does it Take?

Your TEA application will be processed no later than 30 days after the county office received it. If you are eligible, your cash payments will begin within the month your application is approved.

Allowable Work Activities

TEA parents must pursue work activity described in their employment plans for a minimum number of hours per week. Allowable activities include:

- Unsubsidized employment.
- Subsidized employment.
- Micro-enterprise (self employment).
- On-the-job training.
- Group job search (Job club & assisted job search).
- Work experience training.
- Community service.
- Education.
- Vocational educational training.
- Job skills training.
- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or course of study leading to a GED.
- Providing childcare services to an individual who is participating in a community service program.

Your case manager will explain each activity and its participation requirements.

Support Services

The state understands that it may take more than training, education and counseling to help you find a job. It knows you may be worried about who will care for your children while you are engaged in TEA activities.

If needed, the state will pay for childcare and other expenses you may have when you go to work or engage in work-related activity.

If personal or family problems are keeping you from going to work, your case manager can help you solve your problems or refer you to an agency that may be able to help you.

Penalties

If you fail to participate in your work activities, your TEA case manager will see if you are getting all the support services you need. If you do not have a good reason for not participating, your cash payment may be reduced or terminated.

Fraud

Fraud means giving false information or withholding information for the purpose of getting help you are not entitled to under program rules and regulations.

Program Contact Information

For more information about Arkansas Transitional Employment Assistance, call the state Department of Human Services at 501-682-8650 or 1-800-482-8988.

Or send a letter to:

Slot S201

Arkansas Department of Human Services

Donaghey Plaza West

P.O. Box 1437

Little Rock AR 72203-1437.

Content provided by the Department of Human Services

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*The information and statements of law in this fact sheet should not be considered legal advice. This fact sheet is provided as a broad guide to help you understand how certain legal matters are handled in general. Courts may interpret the law differently. Before you take action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. **Always do what the court tells you to do.***